THEORY OF DEATH

761 775 [100] Death distinguishes between men on one hand, women and children on the other. When they die, the former are transformed into jaguars who represent, consequently, so many reincarnated humans. The women and children, on the other hand, disappear with the wind and the storm and are not susceptible to any reappearance.

40. dend dirige nematirina ednadire lukuindige ndakuindige monenkiadukuindige dend dirige monedire liritige amonotiritige tonoditige nitendige (bl)
The woman and child who die do not change into beasts. The man who dies is changed into a jaguar, the woman who dies goes away with the tempest disappears with the storm.

262 Whence, among the Nambikwara, the only perfectly clear prohibition concerning food. Theoretically several exist, broken each time that the occasion is presented, such as those concerning the hawk, the worms from the bacaiuva nuts, and there may be added a probable repugnance concerning the meat of the veado (Cervus sp.). Chickens and dogs are never eaten, but their introduction is recent. [224 281 714] On the other hand, the jaguar can be hunted and killed, and its remains are highly regarded since the hide is used to make the fur bonnets worn in the attire of war; but it is not eaten under any pretext.

41. [following preceding text] loukuindige inkara uiirige kotsitsirige ikuitadige niirige (bl)
775 [the dead man] becomes a jaguar, another eats him, the jaguar carries him off, he is left to another in order to eat him.

This theory complements the information collected in the eastern group more than it differs from it. The jaguar in fact plays the same role as the atsiu, it also carries off the dying. But the central theory adds a complement. This is that the deceased is identified with the animal, who thus becomes a supernatural being. It was not possible to find out if the atsiu which one meets at night are considered to be the souls of reincarnated dead people. (1)

776 171 1. One recognizes in the man-eating jaguar gifted with a supernatural nature a typically Tupi theme, although its present diffusion is much greater. See concerning this subject, Métraux, loc. cit., passim.

●T16
171

and Nimuendaju, "Die Sagen von der Erschaffung und Vernichtung der Welt als Grundlagen der Religion der Apapocuva Guarani," Zeitschrift fur Ethnologie, Berlin, XLVI, 1914. Also, the atãsu in question in the preceding paragraph, curiously evoke the yurupari, or ananga, ancient Tupi genies of the bush against which they defend themselves with a flaming torch which thus plays the same role as the magic javelin (cf. Thevet, cited by Metraux, loc. cit., p. 61). Finally, the atãsu itself often appears in the form of the jaguar; and in the eastern groups at least, it plays the role of the Messenger of Death which the central, southern, and northern groups give over to the jaguar. There is thus in the vocabulary, a close connection between the stars, the jaguar and the atãsu, already noted by Claude d'Abbeville (cited by Metraux, l. c., p. 49) among the Tupinamba: these identified the jaguar with the stars. Like the "celestial" jaguar (Montoya), the "man-eating" (Nimuendaju), the jaguar of the Nambikwara presents a remarkable ambivalence: it is sacred, and at the same time, they kill it. Finally, comparative linguistics confirms the connection. The term which means jaguar in dialect a1, inãñu is associated with the name of the jaguar among the central and southern Tupi: yaouare (Emerillon, Coudreau); iaoruhu (Guajajara, Nimuendaju); jaoarohu (Tapirapé, Kissenberth).

[101] COMMUNICATION WITH A SUPERNATURAL WORLD: SHAMANISM.

T87

It is considered possible to receive visions of far-distant things and revelations of future happenings. These supernatural communications are usually produced upon the occasion of tempests and storms. They are sudden and unforeseen. Every adult male is apt to [263] receive them, for in this case too, the women (except, it seems, the oldest) are excluded from the spiritual life:

42. inãñdãni dẽñõ tamãmatarjani nahoe ejãni ekwãjeni kanahãdan natli aikwasyatirhemete (b1)
Invisible to women the men see it [the thunder]: "Far away I see, close by I see, tomorrow it will arrive, very near it will arrive."
(It is a question here of a warning vision of messengers come from another tribe).

2: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939)1948
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533 **Music and dance.**—Music is clearly tonal, with melodic structures easy to identify. The end of a melody is usually marked with several shrill sounds which are repeated after each coda. Music is both instrumental and choral and usually accompanies dances.

535 Dances are performed under the leadership of the chief. Men and women stamp rhythmically on the ground while turning in a circle. Usually, dancers close one nostril with the left hand to make their singing nasal. Only men perform war dances, forming one or more rows and stepping forward and backward in front of the leader. In the second phase of the dance, they attack a post, a symbolical enemy, with bows and arrows, and clubs. Most of the dances and songs are connected with hunting or seasonal ceremonies, but they may be used at any time for mere entertainment.

534 **Musical instruments.**—Flageolets have four holes and an air duct; three are usually played together, accompanied by a rhythm trumpet made of a piece of bamboo with a hollow calabash fixed to its bottom. Nose flutes (pl. 36, *top, right*) are made of two pieces of calabash glued together with wax and pierced with three holes. One hole is blown with one nostril while the other nostril is closed with the thumb; the other two holes vary the notes. Nose flutes are also played in unison. Double and treble whistles have the air duct cut in the middle of the pipe, so that they can be blown at either end. Panpipes (pl. 36, *bottom, left*) are of two kinds: the common type has five pipes; the other type consists of two or three reeds cut obliquely at the mouth-end. All pipes produce approximately the same note in the latter.

272 273 **Drinks and narcotics.**—Drinks are made with crushed manioc or maize mixed with water, or of palm fruits, especially *Maurítia* sp., *Attalea* sp., and *Oenocarpus distichus*. A slightly alcoholic beverage is prepared of wild pineapples mixed with water.

276 The *Nambicuara* are ardent smokers. They cultivate a tobacco with tiny leaves, which they dry between two pieces of wood, crush with their hands, and store in small calabashes. Cigarettes are rolled in special leaves and tied with grass.

MAGIC AND RELIGION

771 The *Nambicuara* believe in the existence of a diffuse power or substance which may occur in objects and in living beings. It is manifest mostly in poisons, some of which are real (see Weapons, p. 366), some purely magical. To the latter belongs the resin of the barriguda tree (a Bombacaceae), which is kept in tubes like the true poisons. When thrown by a special technique at an enemy, it is believed to make him swell like the trunk of the tree and die.

776 There are also dangerous spirits of the bush and of water, which may appear in the shape of an animal, especially the jaguar, or in a

2: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939)1948
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particular form of their own. Death is identified with these spirits. Men's souls are believed to be reincarnated as jaguars, whereas women's and children's souls are taken away by wind and thunder, never to return.

The highest being is the Thunder, with which any man, though usually a shaman, may have personal contact through revelations and visions. Women, however, except when very old, and children are deprived of these privileges. Women are also forbidden, under pain of death, to see the sacred flageolets (see Musical Instruments, p. 368) played at the ceremonies marking the beginning and the end of the dry season.

SHAMANISM AND MEDICINE

The shaman is sometimes distinct from—but more frequently identified with—the political chief. He is distinguished by having the privilege of polygyny, playing the leading role in ceremonial life, and possessing special supernatural powers. He treats patients by sucking out the disease or by fighting it with small ritual arrows called "thunder-arrows."

In addition to magical cures, the *Nambicuara* treat sickness with numerous medicinal plants, which are used externally or internally according to the disease. For eye infection, which is very frequent, they apply the infusion of a special bark with the help of a container made of leaves.

FOLKLORE, LORE, AND LEARNING

The only legend recorded by Lévi-Strauss (n.d. b) is a flood tale relating the destruction of human life and its re-creation through several incestuous marriages between the offspring of an old woman, who was the only being who escaped the disaster.

The only basic numbers used for counting are one and two, but the natives can reckon higher figures by combining these.

Colors are classified differently according to the dialects. The *Eastern, Central, Southern,* and *Western Nambicuara* agree in putting yellow and green in the same category, whereas the *Northern* group identify red and yellow, and class green, blue, and black together.

Some *Nambicuara* groups call stars by the same name which designates the spirits. The year is divided into two seasons and an undetermined number of lunar months. The day includes six main stages, each based on the position of the sun. Space is divided into two sections that are perpendicular to each other, one corresponding to the apparent movement of the sun and the other to the direction of the main waterways.

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627 The chief advises
[623] tribes quarrelsome individuals but appears to have no powers of coercion. The Wakitáu claim that individuals quarrel but they do not fight among themselves nor do they remember any cases of murder. Unwanted individuals are exiled by common agreement. Houses, fields, and some implements are common property, and food is shared among the members of the band. Axes, machetes, and knives, although owned by individuals are freely used by other members. At death, privately owned tools pass to a man's sons or to his brother. The bow is customarily broken and left on the grave. Even these rules are not strictly adhered to, for when a man becomes seriously ill other men begin to help themselves to his property and the one with the "strongest mouth" gets the most. If the man recovers he cannot reclaim his things but must set about accumulating a new supply.

543 The wife and the children are under the strict control of the husband. Although boys must obey their fathers they owe no special obedience to their mothers. Boys sometimes throw stones and sticks at their mothers and the old women; the older men not only laugh but even encourage this disobedience. The bond between brothers is very close. On occasion they share each other's wives. No particular respect is paid to in-laws.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

774 According to the Wakitáu the spirits are the source of all danger, misfortune, sickness, and death. The ghosts of the dead (*opóhodáu*), bring sickness unless offerings of food are made to them. The ghosts of dead shamans (*owáwa*), belonging to other bands bring thunderstorms which destroy gardens and make hunting difficult. In addition to the ghosts, there is *tsopté*, the hawk of death who lives in the sky, and *xlawá*, the evil armadillo who lives under the ground and wants to destroy the villages and camps of the Nambicuara.

[782] [753] [621] 776

Tsopté is an enormous hawk with huge wings, tail, and claws, who sits in a tree made of human bones. This tree (*hóhokatsu*) is situated on the shore of a shallow lake in the sky. Shooting stars are caused by *tsopté* defecating at night. A small red bird (*tóxlawat*), who lives with *tsopté*, urinates into the lake and when it fills up the urine overflows and comes down in the form of rain.

[821]

[p. 99(a)]

776 [753] Tewpté does not cause illness, but when people get sick he begins to eat away the flesh and finally kills them and eventually takes their bones to his abode in the sky. The missionaries told me that when the first airplane appeared in Nambicuara territory the Indians ran into the forest and hid because they believed the airplane was tewpté. Shamans sometimes visit the land of tewpté by riding up to the sky on the back of [756] urutai, the night hawk or goat sucker. Julio claimed that his father-in-law, who was a powerful shaman, had visited the realm of tewpté while in a trance.

776 756 The Wakitibiu fear most of all the spirit armadillo called uluré. When someone sees bits of manioc cake and charcoal floating on the river near the village, he comes back and tells the shaman, who then goes to examine the signs. If the shaman decides that it is uluré, immediate action must be taken to save the world from destruction. The women and children shut themselves in their huts while the men take their wooden sword clubs (kaláhiu) and go to the bank of the river. The shaman then digs a deep hole in the bank, into which he is lowered with a rope. When he has grasped uluré by the tail he signals the men on the surface to pull him out. The shaman remains at the mouth of the hole with his arm thrust in, holding uluré by the tail while with his other hand he marks points on the ground which are directly over the head, heart, and stomach of uluré. One by one the men thrust their sword clubs into the ground at the places marked by the shaman. As they push the blades in they twist them to make sure that they kill uluré. After the spirit armadillo has been killed, the men go back to the village leaving the shaman alone with the dead uluré. The shaman then cuts up the spirit armadillo, washes the pieces in the river, and begins to sing. When the ghosts of the dead Nambicuara hear the song they come and eat the pieces prepared by the shaman, after which they go away happy because the Nambicuara have been saved.

776 [814] The Wakitibiu say that if they should ever fail to kill uluré, a terrific storm would appear followed by an earthquake, for when uluré gets under the village he will turn the world upside down, tewpté will fall down from the sky, and the Nambicuara will be buried again. In short, they will go back

[p. 100 (A)]

776 under the ground from where ohlokólilev, the culture hero, once released them. They add that they expect this to happen some day.

756 375 The man who is responsible for guarding the band against evil spirits is the shaman (*wunégidiev*). In this task he is assisted by the ghosts of dead shamans of his own band. The spirit or ghost of a dead shaman is known as *enónev* and is sharply distinguished from the ghosts of non-shamans (*sytokodiev*). The *enónev* of other bands, however, are considered evil for they bring thunderstorms. When speaking about shamans and shaman spirits in Portuguese, the Nambicuara refer to both as "trovão" (thunder). This has led many observers to the conclusion that the Nambicuara believe in a thunder spirit. Among the Wakihíte, at least, "trovão" or thunder is nothing more than a shaman or a shaman spirit. Actual thunder, which is caused by a shaman spirit is called *líditi*. A shaman spirit may also enter the body of a jaguar (*yunóvu*), and cause harm to people.

821 The Nambicuara do not like heavy and prolonged rainstorms, for they say that the winds blow down their houses, the lightning sometimes kills people, and the rains wash away the tracks so that they and their dogs have difficulty in following game. To pacify the evil *enónev*, who has caused the storm, the shaman makes a cigar-shaped bundle (*yalídenónev*) out of certain dry leaves, which he ties with cotton twine, leaving long tails at each end. When he wants to stop the rain he lights one end of the bundle, and as it begins to smoke he waves it in the direction of the storm, telling the rain to go away. "Go away, go away, don't be angry at me," he says as he waves the bundle four times. If this does not stop the rain the shaman takes the sword club (*halóhlev*), which appears to have magical powers, and cuts the rain. If the rain still persists, he lights three smudges made by mixing "para tudo" leaves with the *yalídenónev* leaves. When the smoke rises from the smudges he takes a burning brand and waves it against the storm telling it to stop.

756 758 The shamans of one band also practice sorcery against individuals in another band by asking their *enónev* to inject objects into their bodies. When a shaman wishes to inject an object into his enemy he retires into a special hut (*nilóvenev*) and

[p. 100 (8)]